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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manuscript is to encourage the development of the communication skills of preschool children by introducing their parents to a number of learning activities suitable for implementation in the home. It is written to be used by an instructor who is working with preschool parents. The activities, which are designed to be uncomplicated and reasonable in cost and invested time, are grouped in 10 sections: (1) knowing the child; (2) what happens between parent and child; (3) setting goals for the child; (4) emphasizing everyday happenings; (5) reading to children; (6) using free and inexpensive materials for language experiences; (7) making the alphabet letters; (8) games that can be made at home; (9) writing down children's experiences; and (10) writing stories with the child. Each of the sections contains directed activities to be performed with the instructor's guidance, at home activities involving the parent and child, and parent take-home sheets with information and exercises they can use to increase their own knowledge. Some benefits of the program are listed; the major expectation is that the activities will enhance a child's chances of success in the initial stages of learning to read and write. (SDH)

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LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR PRESCHOOLER

PART I: ACTIVITIES AT HOME

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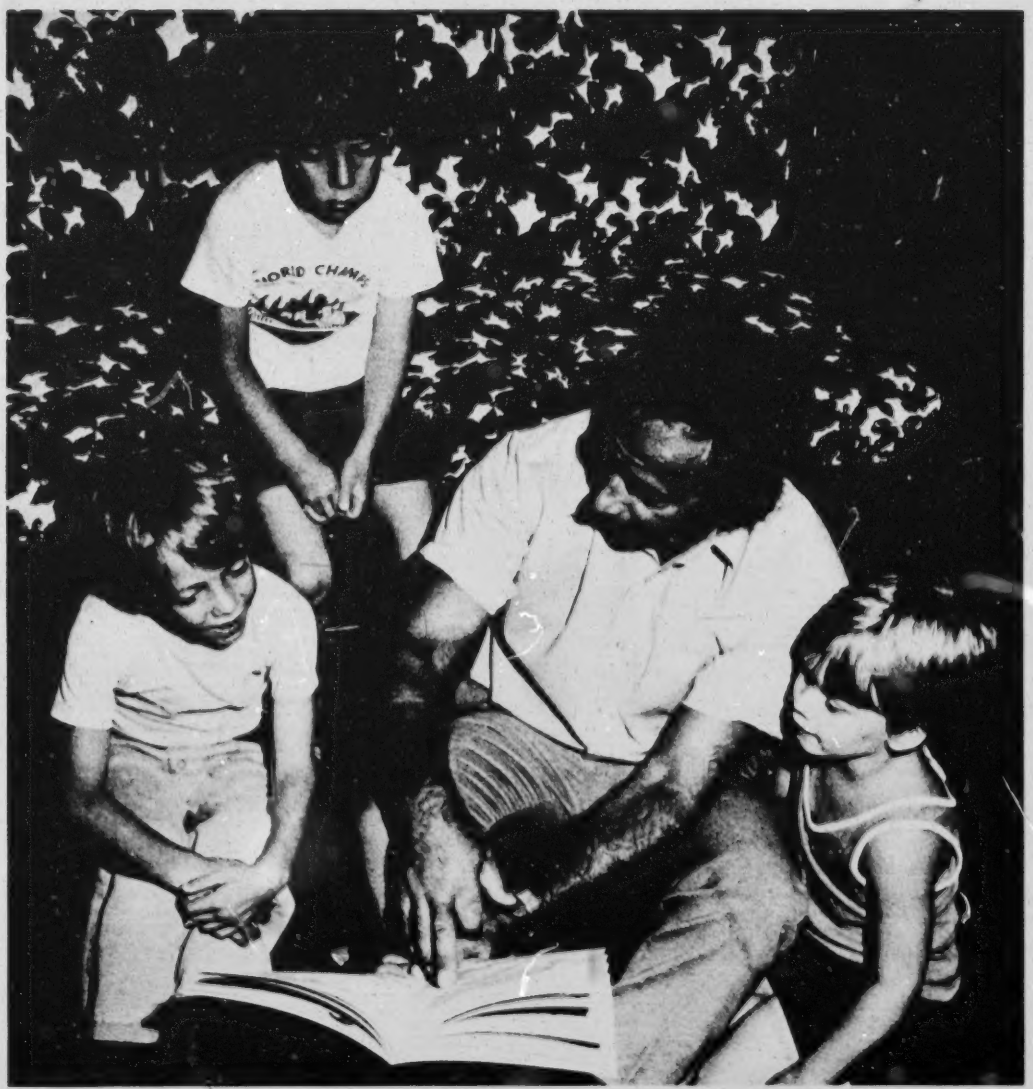
PART I: ACTIVITIES AT HOME



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FOREWORD

Language Experiences for Your Preschooler describes a continuing education course which has the potential for providing a direct and vital supportive service to the K-12 instructional program of any school district. In particular, the language arts curriculum of the early grades will benefit from this course, for its intent is to develop the communication skills of preschool children by introducing parents to a number of learning activities suitable for implementation at home. These learning activities are not costly, nor complicated, nor overly time-consuming; yet, their value is many-fold. Most obviously, the activities will enhance a child's chances of success in the initial stages of learning to read and write. This fact alone commends the course to any board of education concerned about having to maintain "corrective" programs.

Other benefits of a broader nature will also be apparent. It can be expected that children of parents enrolled in this course will show a more keen awareness of their environment and, because of their greater verbal fluency, will manifest an increased confidence in their abilities to interact and cope with the world around them. There are concomitant benefits for the parents as well. Most significant would be the increased interaction with their children which would encourage both mother and father to observe their children, to acknowledge their varying growth patterns, and to be accepting of them as they are. For this reason, *Language Experiences for Your Preschooler* is a program that should appeal to local parent-teacher associations — perhaps even receive their sponsorship.

George K. Tregaskis, associate, Bureau of Continuing Curriculum Development, conceived of the need for such a publication, directed its production, and prepared the final manuscript for printing. The original manuscript was written by Patricia J. Binzer, language arts consultant, Mohonasen Central Schools. Joseph A. Mangano, Chief, Bureau of General Continuing Education assisted in the initial planning of the publication and, enthusiastically endorsed its development.

Reviewing the manuscript and providing critical reactions were Ruth Flurry, Chief, Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education and members of her staff; Angela Cruser, director, Adult School and Family Life Education Program, Amherst Central Schools; Lillian McMillen, instructional specialist, Whitney Avenue Adult Education Center, Niagara Falls; and the staff at the Harambee Prep School, New York City. The photography is the creative work of Patrick J. Manning of the State Education Department. All photos were taken at the Washington Irving Education Center through the courtesy of Edwin A. Agresta, Coordinator and Sylvia Lenss, teacher at the Living Center in Schenectady.

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MESSAGE TO THE INSTRUCTOR

In their book, *Preventing Reading Failure,* Jeannette Jansky and Katrina de Hirsch noted the need for such programs as this publication is intended to promote: "Preschool programs for disadvantaged children which do not involve mothers are doomed to failure. The problem is not to provide enrichment and opportunities for the children but to restructure mother-child interaction patterns. ...mothering and teaching... go together; the child needs both if he is to perform up to his maximum capacity in an academic setting."

This quote emphasizes that educators should give increased consideration to the prevention, rather than the remediation, of the reading failures which are so prevalant among a large segment of our population. The need, though, extends beyond the disadvantaged. It is true that the incidence of reading failure is greater among urban, lower socio-economic groups, but by no means are suburban, middle and upper socio-economic families exempt from the frustrations of a child experiencing difficulty in learning the communication skills. The activities described in this publication will prove to be profitable for the preschool children of all families. In addition, many of the activities, when used with kindergarten and primary grade children, will reinforce the learning experiences of the classroom.

This publication broadens a second concept of Jansky's. The suggestion that some reading failures might be prevented, or at least their severity limited, by enriched and structured mother-child language experiences, is expanded to include total family participation. For boys particularly there are tremendous motivational advantages in having a father, uncle, or older brother model the desired language behaviors. Ideally, then, both mother and father should be enrolled in this program.

The instructor using this guide will notice that there is inserted throughout the ten chapters, parent take-home sheets printed in bold face type. The intent is that the instructor remove these from the book and duplicate them in quantities sufficient for distribution. In order that the parents may compile these in order, they have been sub-paginated with the new number encircled. Therefore it is suggested that before xeroxing these handouts, the original page numbers be masked.

Once parents have begun to implement some of the activities suggested in this publication, it is anticipated that they will return to class eager to share their successes. Their enthusiastic accounts of their child's responses and their high motivation to know of new learning experiences in which they might engage their children, can make this one of the most inspiring assignments of any teaching career.

JOSEPH A. MANGANO, *Chief*
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I. HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD?

For a parent to provide worthwhile experiences for his child he must first learn to look at the child objectively to determine:

- *What can the child do?*
- *What is he ready to learn?*

Looking at their children objectively is difficult for many parents. Even though they may know what a child can do, parents are not sure what it means. They will need help in deciding what the child is ready to learn.

WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD DO?

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To provide a starting point for observing and discussing individual children in terms of age, size, and placement in the family.

ACTIVITY: Place the following headings on the chalkboard.

Boy or Girl	Age	Brothers Older	Brothers Younger	Sisters Older	Sisters Younger	Height	Weight

Ask each member of the group to think about one of their children and, in turn, provide the information asked for under each heading. If a parent is unsure of the height or weight encourage them to approximate. Record the information on the board under the appropriate headings.

After the parents have provided the information, summarize it for them by saying, for example: We are talking about 10 boys and 5 girls. They are 3 and 4 years old, some have brothers and sisters. They are between 3 and 4 feet tall and weigh between 30 and 40 pounds.

PURPOSE: To look for traits that are not common to all children; to look for individual differences.

ACTIVITY: To initiate a discussion of how children differ from each other, you may ask the following questions. Have the parents answer in terms of the same child they chose for the previous activity.

Ask the parents to describe one thing about their child that is not already known; i.e., hair color, foot size, or tooth missing. Leading questions might be:

- *What is your child's favorite food?*
- *What does he like to do?*
- *What doesn't he like to do?*

Summarize the discussion, pointing out the things the children seem to have in common and the ways in which they differ. Emphasize that there are certain qualities that will change with age and others will remain the same; i.e., hair color and sex.

PURPOSE: To note what the children have learned to do since they were born.

ACTIVITY: Ask the parents to tell you one thing their child has learned to do. List the answers on the board. Probably answers will include:

- walk
- talk
- sit up
- eat (feed himself)
- run

Then ask for approximate ages at which the child learned the various tasks. You should find that the ages vary from child to child.

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD READY TO LEARN?

PURPOSE: To assist each parent in the evaluation of his child to determine what the child can do and what he is ready to learn.

ACTIVITY: Distribute the questionnaire, How Well Do You Know Your Child? (p. 3). Ask each parent to write his answers to the questions as you read them aloud. If they aren't sure how to answer a question, have them make a circle around the letter at the beginning of the question; i.e., if the parent does not know if the child can skip, he should circle the letter at the beginning of that statement.

PURPOSE: To interpret the results of the questionnaire to the parents. It is important that the parents are not made to feel that one child is inferior to another if he talked later than most or walked later than other children. The purpose of the questions is to help each parent get to know his own child and to recognize major problems which may impede his rate of learning and to provide parents with some general guidelines regarding maturational curves.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents look over their answers to the questions to decide if their child is developing as might be expected. Distribute Guidelines for Maturation (p. 5).

AT HOME ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To provide the parent with additional guidelines for getting to know his child.

ACTIVITY OPTION #1: If there were some questions the parents could not answer about their children, encourage them to take the questionnaire home and answer the questions after they talk them over with other members of the family or by observing their children more closely.

ACTIVITY OPTION #2: To help parents of more than one child see how different each of their children is, encourage them to answer the questions for each child in their family.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD?

Your child grows in many ways. You can see that he has grown taller. You can see that he has become heavier. To help you get to know other ways in which your child has grown, answer the following questions.

I. Language Development

A. At what age did your child say his first words? _____

B. At what age did your child start to talk in sentences? _____

C. Did he use "baby talk?" _____ Until what age? _____

D. When he talks now do most people understand what he's trying to say? _____

E. Does he talk a great deal at home? _____

F. Does he enjoy having a conversation with members of the family: _____ often; _____ occasionally; _____ rarely?

II. Physical Development

A. At what age did your child start to walk? _____

B. Does your child see well? _____

C. Does your child hear well? _____

D. Does your child have a health problem which may effect his school work? _____

E. Can your child skip? _____

F. Can he tie his shoes? _____

G. Can he "stay within the lines" when coloring a picture? _____

H. Can he cut out a picture using scissors? _____

III. Social Development

A. Does your child have friends who come to your house to play: _____ often; _____ occasionally; _____ rarely?

B. Does your child go to other children's homes to play: _____ often; _____ occasionally; _____ rarely?

C. Has your child been with a baby-sitter: _____ often; _____ occasionally; _____ rarely?

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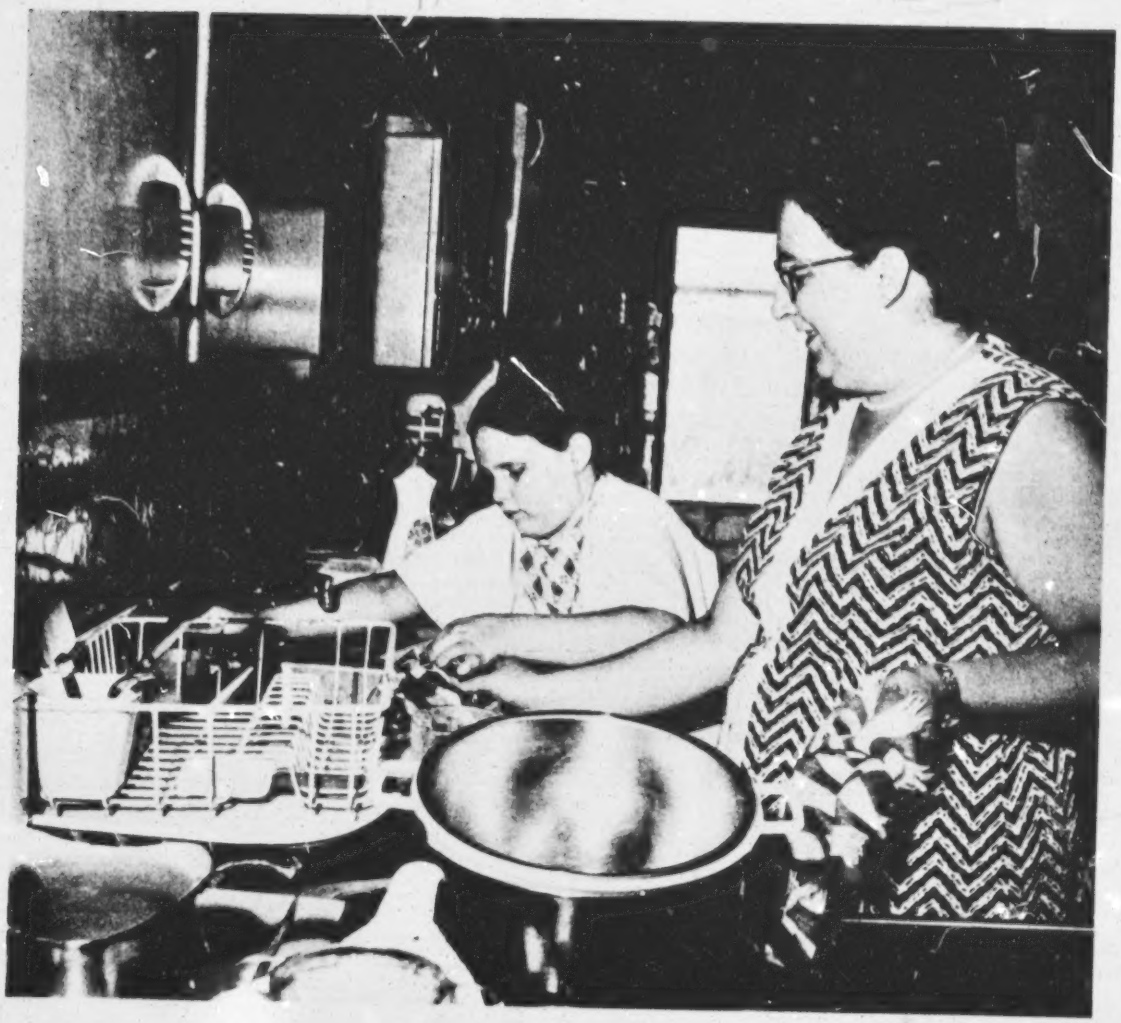
D. When your child is with other children, is he: _____ too talkative; _____ relaxed; _____ shy?

E. When your child is with adults, other than close relatives, is he: _____ too talkative; _____ relaxed; _____ shy?



GUIDELINES FOR MATURATION

- Language Development
  - Most children say their first words at about age 1.
  - Most children begin to use short sentences by 2 1/2.
  - "Baby talk" is common for most children but is usually outgrown by age 4.
  - Children who talk a lot tend to develop patterns of language sooner than children who talk very little. They have more experience talking. They tend to ask more questions. They get more practice explaining things than the quiet child.
- Physical Development
  - For a child to grow and learn the way we expect him to, he needs to be healthy. He needs to see well and hear well. Your child should be seen by a physician at least once a year.
  - By age 6 most children can skip, tie their shoes, use scissors, and color a picture "staying in the lines." Many children like to start learning these kinds of things between the ages of 3 and 4.
- Social Development
  - Some children like to be alone. Others are not happy unless they have someone to play with them. When a child starts school he will be with many children. It is helpful to him if he has had some experience with other children and other adults before he must leave home and go to school.
  - How your child acts with other children and other adults will help you decide if your child needs more experiences with other people before he starts school.
  - If your child has never been left in the care of another adult (i.e., a baby-sitter) he may find it difficult to accept the teacher when he begins school.
  - If he is too shy with many children he may need more time with only one or two children. If he's too bossy with other children, he may need more adult supervision for awhile.

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II. WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CHILD?

The parents are the most important teachers a child will ever have. From the time the child is born he is learning from the parents. As the parents become more aware of this role as teachers of the child, they will make a more conscious effort to provide the necessary experiences and verbal stimulation.

In Chapter I the parent looked closely at one of his children. Chapter II will help the parent determine what the child and parent can do together.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To help the parents become aware of the activities they take part in with their children.

ACTIVITY: To initiate a general discussion of parent-child activities, pose some of the following questions:

- What do you and your children do together?
- What do you do at home as a family?
  - Do you eat your meals together?
  - Do you watch television together?
  - Do you work around the house together?
- Do you go places as a family?
  - Where do you go?
  - How often do you go?

PURPOSE: To develop a list of everyday experiences that a child and his parents can engage in together.

ACTIVITY: Distribute the Checklist of Home Activities (p. 8). Have the parents check their answers in Column 1 or 2 as you read the sheet aloud. (Column 3 will be dealt with separately.)

PURPOSE: To provide the parents with ideas for trying some of the home activities for the first time.

ACTIVITY: Begin by asking parents to name an activity they have never tried with their children and the reasons why the activity has not been tried. (They may feel the children are too young, it makes too much of a mess, or it takes too long.) Then ask the parents who have tried that particular activity to describe the results.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To encourage the parents to broaden the range of activities they engage in with their children.

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ACTIVITY: Have the parents look down through the checklist and reread the activities they checked as "Never Do This."

If they are willing to "give it a try" have them place a check mark after the activity in column 3. Encourage each parent to choose at least three new activities to try at home. All activities will not be appropriate for every family. If they have tried all of the activities before, suggest that they choose three activities they haven't done in a long while.

CHECKLIST OF HOME ACTIVITIES

There are many activities that children can do with their parents that are valuable learning experiences in themselves but which also provide rich opportunities for parent-child dialog. Some activities may be done with the father; some with the mother. Other activities may be done as a whole family. Both boys and girls can enjoy and learn from the activities listed below. For example, helping with the dishes need not be only a job for girls, and going to the service station need not be just for boys.

Put a check in column 1 or column 2 after each activity.

Activity With Parent and Child	Do This Often	Never Do This	Will Give It A Try
Eat breakfast together			
Eat lunch together			
Eat supper together			
Do the dishes			
Plan and fix the meals			
Make a cake (cookies, etc.)			
Make the beds			
Do the laundry			
Dust the furniture			
Put things away (toys, clothes, etc.)			
Clean the yard			
Rake leaves			
Wash the car			
Go the the gas station			
Fix something around the house			
Mow the lawn			
Pull weeds			
Shovel snow			
Wash windows			
Go to the store			
Go for a walk			
Watch television			
Read a book			
Read poetry			
Recite favorite rhymes			
Read the newspaper comic strips			
Find places on road maps			
Look at magazine pictures			
Listen to music			
Sing favorite songs			
Toss a ball			
Play a game			
Put a puzzle together			
Share the events of the day			
Play with a pet			

III. SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD

Some parents expect too much too soon from their children, while others don't expect enough. If parents can set realistic goals for their children, the child can learn new things gradually yet continuously without becoming bored or frustrated. Parents need to learn to set long-range goals and short-range goals for their children as well as general goals and specific goals. Goals may be defined as something you want to be able to do; someone you want to be.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To differentiate between the various kinds of goals.

ACTIVITY: Initiate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- *What do you want for your child?*

List some of the answers on the board. Since it is a general question, you should expect general answers such as: "To be happy"; "To grow up to be a good person."

Next, ask the following questions:

- *What do you want your child to be like in 10 years? 5 years? 1 year? Tomorrow?*

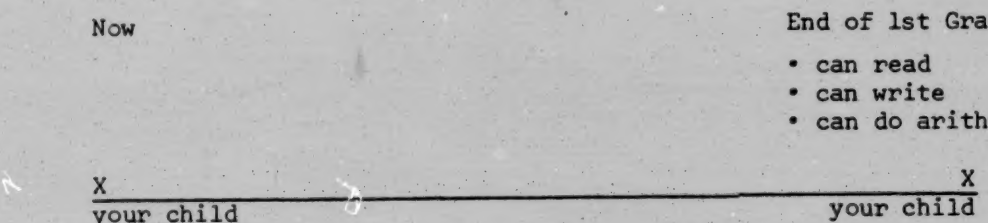
The questions are still general and may be difficult for the parents to answer. You may wish to point out that even though the goals asked for went from long-range goals to short-range goals, the questions are difficult to answer because they were not sure why they were making their decision.

Now try a more specific question:

- *What do you want your child to be able to do at the end of first grade?*

List the answers given on the board. The answers should include: read, write, do arithmetic, etc. They may include such things as tie his shoes, make his bed. The answers are specific goals the parents have set for their children, even though they are long-range goals.

The following diagram drawn on the board may help the parents answer the next question:



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- *What does your child need to learn that will help him do all of these things by the end of first grade?*

Discuss the answers as they are given. Try to find a positive need for each skill suggested. Answers may include: the alphabet, counting, color names, etc. Make the point that there are many things a child can learn to do at home that will help him at school.

PURPOSE: To help the parents identify some specific things that can be learned at home before the child starts school.

ACTIVITY: Distribute the questionnaire, Things Learned Early, (p. 11). Ask parents to respond as accurately and completely as possible. Indicate to parents that it would be to their child's advantage to have learned these things before they begin school. But caution the parents against attempting a crash program to teach all these facts and concepts within a short time.

THINGS LEARNED EARLY

Here is a list of things your child can learn at home before he goes to first grade. He can learn many of these things before he goes to kindergarten. Which things do you think your child knows already?

	Yes	No
Does your child know		
• his whole name.		
• his address		
• his telephone number.		
• the names of his brothers and sisters		
• his parents' names.		
• how old he is		
• when his birthday is.		
Does your child know		
• the names of colors		
• the names of shapes (circle, square, rectangle)		
• how to count to 5 (using objects)		
• how to count to 10.		
Does your child know the difference between		
• up and down		
• left and right.		
• over and under.		
• before and after.		
• big and little.		
• larger and smaller.		
Does your child		
• enjoy listening to stories.		
• ask you to read favorite stories.		
• make up little rhymes		
• remember favorite rhymes.		
• tell a favorite story when looking at the pictures.		
• like to have you write down stories he creates.		

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AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: Help the parents get started working with their children at home.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents pick one thing on the list that their child may not know, but that he is old enough to learn. Encourage them to try to teach it to the child. Experiences should be shared.

NOTE: You may wish to come back to this section again at the last session to help the parents evaluate the many ways they have helped their children. They may also wish to discuss additional ways in which to help their children.

IV. MAKING THE MOST OF EVERYDAY HAPPENINGS

It is important that the parents understand that teaching their child something need not always require careful planning and expensive materials. By making the most of everyday happenings they will often be teaching their child in a very natural way.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To help parents use everyday happenings to talk to their children and explain things to their children.

ACTIVITY: Present the following situations to the parents and have them tell what reactions they would give their child:

- Your young child came running up to you crying because the older kids won't let him play.
- You have insisted that your child eat all of his supper before he can have dessert. He wants to know why.
- You are changing a burned-out lightbulb in a lamp and your child wants to know what happened to it.
- The pet turtle died. Your child wants to know why.
- You are making supper and your child wants to know why you are having a particular dish.
- Have the parents tell about "different" questions they have had to answer at home. See how other parents would have handled it.

PURPOSE: To help the parents learn to listen to their children.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents rate themselves as listeners. As you read the following questions, have the parents write YES or NO on a piece of paper numbered 1 to 6.

1. When your child is talking to you, do you stop what you are doing to listen to him?
2. When your child is explaining something that happened, do you let him finish without interrupting?
3. When you don't understand what your child is talking about, do you ask him questions that will help him to explain it better?
4. Do you ask your child to tell you what he wants instead of letting him point to things?
5. Do you let your child have a chance to tell things to the family at mealtime?

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6. When your children are talking to each other, do you sometimes listen to what they say?

Discuss the questions with the parents. They may suggest other times when it is important to listen to children.

PURPOSE: To provide suggestions for parents to help their children make decisions.

ACTIVITY: To start a discussion ask the parents:

- *How old should a child be before he should make his own decisions?*

Then ask the parents what decisions a preschool child should be allowed to make. Point out that young children can make many decisions if they are given choices. They may choose which thing they want from the choices offered. Distribute and discuss Decisions a Preschooler Can Make (p. 15).

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To encourage parents to provide their children with opportunities to make decisions.

ACTIVITY: Ask parents to identify home situations in which they will be allowing their children to make their own decisions. These might be shared in class.

DECISIONS A PRESCHOOLER CAN MAKE

- What to wear

  Do you want to wear this shirt or that shirt?
  NOT: What do you want to wear?

- What to eat

  Do you want chicken soup or pea soup?
  NOT: What do you want for lunch?

- What to do

  Do you want to brush your teeth first or take your bath first?
  NOT: Do you want to take a bath and brush your teeth?

- How to help

  Do you want to help me set the table or help your father fix the screen door?
  NOT: Do you want to help?

- What to buy

  Do you want the red shoes or the blue shoes?
  NOT: What shoes do you want?

Children need to learn to make decisions from the time they are 2. Learning to make wise decisions helps the child grow as an independent person. Parents should provide many situations which will allow children to make decisions which effect them in small ways.

V. READING TO CHILDREN

The importance of reading to children every day cannot be emphasized too strongly. How parents read to children is almost as important as what parents read.

For this activity, the instructor will need a number of books appropriate for young children which parents will be permitted to borrow. As a rough estimate there should be 5 times more books than parents. These may be borrowed from local public libraries or the libraries of neighborhood elementary schools. Perhaps, too, parents may wish to pool and share their home libraries.

DIRECTED ACTIVITY-1: Selecting a Book

PURPOSE: To provide parents with guidelines for selecting books for children.

ACTIVITY: Distribute and discuss the questions related to Selecting a Book (p. 21). Then distribute several children's books for the parents to look at. Using the questions, have the parents select a book to read to their children. You may wish to have the parents tell the answers to the questions after they have made their selection. You may wish to include the following information when discussing the questions with the parents:

- *For whom am I choosing the book?*
  Before choosing a book you must decide who will use the book. You may wish to choose a book for a particular child in your family. You may wish to choose one to read to all of your children. Sometimes you may choose a book that an older child can read to himself or to a younger brother or sister. It is also fun to choose a book that the whole family will enjoy reading aloud to each other. A good choice is one that can be enjoyed in many ways by many members of the family. A good choice is also one that will have special meaning to even one child.

- *How old are the children I'll be reading to?*
  - A book that will appeal to a 3-year-old may not be enjoyed by an 8-year-old, and vice versa. Yet there are books that are so well written that they can be enjoyed by children of all ages.

  - Very young children like short stories that can be read over and over. They enjoy books that repeat little phrases that they can say with you. Through the age of 5, children enjoy stories in a family setting whether it's human or animal families. Picture books about real things such as fire engines, boats, and trucks are also popular.

  - Children from 6 to 8 years of age need two kinds of books: books they can read and books you read to them. Just because your child has learned to read, don't feel that you should not read to him anymore. It is important to remember that children can understand many

more words than they can read until they are 11 or 12 years old. There are many things a child can learn from books that you read to him that he would not be able to read to himself.

- *What kind of stories do they like?*
  - Some children only like funny, silly stories. Other children like stories about things they have done themselves. Make-believe stories appeal to some children while others enjoy true stories about real things.

  - When selecting books for children, try to choose a variety. If children only hear one kind of story they will not learn to enjoy many kinds of books. The more variety a child has, the more varied his learning experiences will be and the more he will grow.

- *What are they interested in?*
  - Young children's interests change from day to day as they have new experiences. Make the most of their present interests when selecting books to read to them. If your child became excited when a fire engine roared down the street, find a book about fire engines to help him learn more about them. If he has a pet, select a book on how to care for the pet. Stories about that particular animal will also be good choices.

  - Take advantage of the many little experiences your child has. Help him learn more from these experiences by reading stories that will add to what he already knows.

- *How long will they pay attention?*
  - How long children will sit quietly and enjoy a story depends partly on their age. It also depends upon how good the book is and how well you read it to them.

  - A good book read with enthusiasm will hold the attention of even very young children for several minutes. Ten minutes for children under 5 is probably all you should expect. Twenty minutes for children over 5 is probably more than enough.

- *Is the book too long?*
  - A really good book is never too long. You are sorry to see it end. However, some books are too long to be read in one sitting. Many children enjoy hearing a chapter or two chapters a day. You may choose longer stories for these children and take several days to finish the book.

  - Very young children have difficulty remembering what happened in the story over a period of time. They may need stories that can be read in one sitting or books with many stories about the same characters.

- *Are the pictures attractive?*
  - The quality of the pictures is very important to a young child; especially to a child who cannot read. Much of his enjoyment of the books comes from looking at the pictures as he hears the stories.

- The pictures are also important for a child who is just beginning to learn to read. He will often use the pictures to help him figure out the words he doesn't know.

- *Will they understand most of the words in the book?*
  - Read parts of the book to yourself. You know your children pretty well. Do the words sound like they would make sense to your children?

  - Children can learn the meaning of many new words by hearing them used in stories. But if there are too many strange words they will not understand the meaning of what you read.

- *Will they understand the story?*
  - Even though your children may understand the words in the book, they may not understand the story. Their understanding will depend on the experiences they have had. A book on "The Problems of Raising a Camel" will not mean much to a child who doesn't even know what a camel is. Yet children do not need to know anything about monkeys to enjoy stories about Curious George. They have been "curious children." They have had enough experiences to understand the fun of the story.

- *Will they enjoy looking at the book alone?*
  - It is not always necessary to select books that children will enjoy alone. In fact, there is great value in books that must be read together.

  - Many children do enjoy looking at a book many times. They may just look at the pictures or they may tell the story out loud as they turn the pages. They may want to tell you the story as they turn the pages.

- *Will an older child be able to read it alone?*
  - Once children have learned to read, they often like to read a book by themselves after you have read it to them. Since they are already familiar with the story, it is easier for them to figure out unfamiliar words. Some children also enjoy reading to younger brothers and sisters.

  - It is not necessary to select only books you think the older child can read alone.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To have the parents read the book they selected to their children and evaluate their choice.

ACTIVITY: Allow the parents to borrow the book they selected to read to their children. As a followup, have the parents tell the group about the experience during the following meeting.

DIRECTED ACTIVITY-2: The Right Time, Place, and Way To Read to Children

PURPOSE: To help the parents decide on the "right time" for them to read to their children.

ACTIVITY: Ask the parents to tell when they usually read to their children and why. Most will probably say they read to their children just before they go to bed. Point out that the following are also good times to read to children:

- Read to older children when the younger ones are taking a nap.
- Read to the younger children when the older ones are at school or out playing.
- Read to the children while you are waiting at the doctor's office.
- Read to the children on long trips to help the time go faster.
- Read a story to a child who is having a "bad day" and may need some quiet, comforting thing to do with you.
- Read a book when it will answer a question a child has just asked.
- Read a book on a rainy or snowy afternoon.
- Read a book on how to make something when your children are looking for something different to do.
- Read a book anytime you feel like it.

PURPOSE: To help the parents decide on the "right place" to read to their children.

ACTIVITY: There are many places that are the "right places" to read to children. Ask the parents where they read to their children. The point you wish to make is that it doesn't matter where they read to their children. However, it is more beneficial to young children if the following considerations are kept in mind.

- Children should be close enough to see the pictures as you read. This will help them associate the pictures with what you are reading.
- Children should be looking at the book and not at you. This will help them to learn that you are saying the words in the book. They may also start to pick out a few words they have learned.
- The children should turn the pages when you are ready. By doing this they will learn that part of the story is on one page and that a book is read from left to right.

PURPOSE: To show the parents how to read books with the right expression and fluency for the listener.

ACTIVITY: Point out that reading a book is a great deal like acting in a play. To be a good reader you must be a bit of an actor. It also helps if you enjoy the book you are reading.

Select a short story and read it to the parents. Read the book with a great deal of expression and enthusiasm.

Then have the parents each select a book. Have them read it silently first. (Actors always rehearse their parts.) Next, have the parents go off by themselves and read the book aloud—without an audience.

If you have access to tape recorders, some parents may wish to record the story to see how they sound.

Ask for a few volunteers to read part of their books to the group. Tactfully offer suggestions for improvement.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: Provide the parents with the opportunity to apply the skills discussed.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents select a book to take home. Ask them to think about the following things after they read it to the children.

- Did I select a good book?
- Did I find a good place to read it?
- Did I choose a good time to read it?
- Did I read it like I really enjoyed it?

Discuss the experience with the parents at the next session.

DIRECTED ACTIVITY-3: Asking Questions About the Book

PURPOSE: To provide the parents with questions they may ask their children to broaden the experience of reading a particular book.

ACTIVITY: Point out that as children become involved with a book, they will remember it longer and will learn more from the experience. Discussing a book and asking and answering questions about the book are ways to help the child gain more from the experience.

Distribute and discuss copies of Good Questions to Ask (p. 22). All of the questions will not go with every book they read. The parents will need to learn what kind of questions should be asked for different kinds of books. Too many questions can also spoil the fun of the book.

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SELECTING A BOOK

When selecting a book to read to your children ask yourself the following questions:

- Who am I choosing the book for?
- How old are the children I'll be reading to?
- What kind of stories do they like?
- What are they interested in?
- How long will they pay attention?
- Is the book too long?
- Are the pictures attractive?
- Will they understand most of the words in the book?
- Will they understand the story?
- Will they enjoy looking at the book alone?
- Will an older child be able to read it alone?

GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK

Talk about the books as you read to your children. Ask them some questions about the story. Let them ask you questions too. Here are some questions you might ask as you read a book. Avoid quizzing the child to the point where the story line is lost.

- Look at the cover of this book. What do you think it will be about?
- What is that? Who is that?
- What is he doing? Why do you suppose he's doing that?
- How do you think he feels about what happened? Has anything like that ever happened to you? Have you ever felt that way?
- What do you think will happen next? Why? How can we find out if you're right?
- Do you think this is a true story? Did it really happen? Or did someone just make it up?
- That's the end of the story. Let's see how much we remember.
  - Who was in the story?
  - Where were they?
  - What happened first?
  - Then what happened?
  - What happened after that?
  - What did the people (animals, trucks, etc.) in the story look like?
  - What was the name of the book?
  - Can you tell me the story as we look at the pictures?
  - Let's look on this page (choose any page). Can you tell me what's happening here? What happened just before that? What happened right after that?
  - Have we read any other stories about people like these? What are the names of those stories?
  - What's your favorite story? (Don't be surprised if the last story heard is always the favorite one.)

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PURPOSE: To give the parents an opportunity to use the list of questions to ask about books.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents select a book for their children. Ask them to read the book. Next, have them read the questions and put a little check mark in front of the questions they think would be appropriate to ask their children. They may also wish to write down page numbers. Urge them to be selective. Too many questions will cause the children to lose interest. You may wish to do this activity more than once.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To encourage the parents to use the selected book and questions with their children.

ACTIVITY: Ask the parents to read to their children the book they selected. They should ask the children questions as they read, as well as after they have finished reading the book.

Provide additional practice for parents who do not feel ready to continue this activity independently.

VI. USING FREE AND INEXPENSIVE MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES

Children can have an endless variety of materials to work with to develop their language skills if parents learn to be creative collectors. There are many miscellaneous items around the house that tend to be overlooked as a source of worthwhile pleasure for young children. Also, there are many inexpensive materials which can be purchased to add to the child's "found" materials.

MAKING AND USING A SCRAPBOX

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To help parents identify what things they may have at home that could be placed in a scrapbox for their children.

ACTIVITY: You may wish to begin a discussion by saying: *We will be talking about activities you can do with your child to increase his language skills. Each of you will be given a shoebox to start a scrapbox for your child to use for these activities. What are some of the things you have at home that could go in the box?*

As the parents suggest items, list them on the board. This list might include:

- rubber bands that come on fruits and vegetables
- twist-type closures that come on bread
- toys found in cereal boxes
- little samples of cloth and cotton
- small boxes and other little containers
- pretty, old buttons of different sizes and colors
- pieces of string and ribbon
- empty spools
- stamps from an envelope
- empty paper-towel and toilet-paper rolls
- clean, but used, pieces of aluminum foil
- old socks of different sizes and colors
- pieces of yarn
- small scraps of colored paper, sandpaper
- old birthday cards

What are some items that should not go in the box?

- sharp objects (knives, pins)
- perishable foods (candy, fruit)
- dangerous substances (pills or poisons)
- valuable objects (jewelry, money)
- uncommon objects (bobbin, golf tee)
- confusing items (playing cards, coloring books)

PURPOSE: To encourage each parent to follow through with the idea of starting a scrapbox.

MATERIALS NEEDED: One shoebox or facsimile for each parent, glue, construction paper or contact paper, felt tipped pens or crayons.

ACTIVITY: Give each parent a shoebox and have them use the materials provided to decorate the scrapbox for their child. Even though their child may not be able to read, have the parents write the word *scrapbox* on the cover in bold letters. If only one child will use the box the parent may wish to write the child's name on the box as well; i.e., *Joey's Scrapbox*. The parent may take the box home as a present for his child.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To provide an informal language activity between parent and child with a specific purpose.

ACTIVITY: The parents and children should begin to find things to put in the scrapbox. The items may include anything small. It is not necessary to collect only the things suggested during the discussion. Have the parents bring the box with things collected to the next session.

DIRECTED ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To provide the parents with ways to use the items in the scrapbox.

MATERIALS NEEDED: The parents were asked to bring their scrapbox, with the items collected, to this group session. You may feel the need to have three or four filled scrapboxes on hand to loan to parents who are attending for the first time or for parents who forgot to bring their box from home.

ACTIVITY: The items in the scrapboxes may be used to develop or reinforce some of the basic concepts children need to learn. Begin developing possible activities for parents to use with their child by asking them to do the following:

- *Look in your scrapbox and find one thing that is little.*
- *Look in your scrapbox and find one thing that is smooth.*
- *Find something that is red.*
- *Find something that is round.*
- *Find something that is light.*

When you chose something little from the scrapbox you were choosing a thing because of its size.

When you chose something smooth you were choosing a thing because of its texture.

When you chose something red what were you doing? (Choosing something because of its color.)

What were you doing when you chose something round? (Choosing something because of its shape.)

What were you doing when you chose something light? (Choosing something because of its weight.)

These are all ways your child can learn to classify and identify the items in the scrapbox.

PURPOSE: To show the parents how to use the scrapboxes to teach their children about color, size, shape, weight and texture.

BACKGROUND: Some concepts are learned by children very quickly. Other ideas are difficult for young children to understand without many experiences. When using the suggested scrapbox activities each parent will have to decide what his child already knows. Then the parent can decide what his child is ready to learn. A child does not have to know everything about one concept before starting the next set of activities.

All of the experiences using the scrapbox should be enjoyable for the child and the parent.

ACTIVITY: Provide each parent with a copy of Using the Scrapbox (pp. 28 through 31), and some plain paper. As they look through the activities point out that the activities are set up in the following order:

- Beginning activities with color
- Beginning activities with size
- Beginning activities with shape
- Beginning activities with weight
- Beginning activities with texture

Since the activities with color will be used first, have the parents look through the objects in their scrapbox to make sure that there is at least one item for each common color. Ask them to write down the colors that are missing from the box as a reminder to find additional items before starting the color activities with their child.

The following colors should be used first: red, yellow, green, blue, black, brown, and white. After the child knows these basic colors the parents may wish to include colors such as: orange, purple, pink, gray, orchid, etc.

The parents may wish to sit in groups of three or four and look at the items in the scrapboxes for ideas for other items to be added.

Discuss the five beginning activities for color with the parents to make sure they understand what to do at home with their child.

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AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: The parent should notice which colors his child knows and which colors he does not know. Much of the time with the child should be used to help him learn the colors he does not already know.

ACTIVITY: Suggest to the parents that they use the Beginning Activities With Color starting with the common colors first. Caution them to work only a few minutes at a time, keeping it *fun* and stopping before their child becomes tired. Remind them to record what colors their child does not know and to find other items of that color to put in the scrapbox.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To help the parents anticipate what they will need for the other scrapbox activities.

ACTIVITY: As you read through the beginning activities for size, shape, weight and texture with the parents have them write down items they need to add to their scrapboxes before they begin the activities at home.

PURPOSE: The parent will be completing the rest of the activities as he thinks his child is ready. Therefore, it will be necessary to have a time set aside for the next few sessions for the parents to share the results of the home activities and to provide them with additional help as needed.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents tell the group about the home activities using the scrapboxes. They may have suggestions to offer each other for additional activities which they have found their children enjoyed.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: For the parent to work with his child at home based upon what the child knows and what he is ready to learn.

ACTIVITY: Encourage the parents to complete the activities using the scrapbox with their child and to share their experiences with the group. The parents can continue these activities while they collect the materials for the next activity.

USING THE SCRAPBOX

You should help your child collect a wide variety of little things to put in his scrapbox. Add to the collection as other interesting items turn up around the house.

Listed below are some of the ways you may use the scrapbox with your child.

BEGINNING ACTIVITIES WITH COLOR

1. Sort the items in the box by color. Put all of the red things in one pile; the yellow things in another; and so on. If an item has many colors put it in a pile of things with many colors. Put everything back in the box.

2. Ask your child to find something that is the color that you name (red, blue, green, etc.) and take it out of the box. Then ask your child to name something that is *not* in the box that is also that color. He may want to name everything in the room that is the color asked for.

3. Take out a few things from the box. Ask the child to tell you what color each item is as you point to it. (Tell him if he doesn't know.)

4. To help your child learn to remember experiences, put everything back in the scrapbox and put on the cover. Now ask him to name the items in the box by color. For example: *There is something in this box that's red. What is it? What did we put in the box that is blue?*

5. The next time you try any of these activities, you may wish to say to your child, *Let's play colors with your scrapbox.* This will help the child learn that things red, blue, green, yellow etc. are all names of colors.

BEGINNING ACTIVITIES WITH SIZE

1. Help your child learn that the size we call something will change from time to time. A pea is little next to a cat, but big next to a grain of sand.

   Ask him to take something big out of the box. Have him put it many places and tell you if it still looks big. Put it in your hand. Put it on the floor then stand up and look down at it. Put it next to a chair, the stove or his bed. Does it still look big? Do the same kind of things with an item your child selects from the box when you ask him to find something little.

2. Take any object out of the box. Ask your child to find something in the box that is bigger. Then ask your child to find something in the box that is smaller. For example: You might take a postage stamp out of the box. The child may select a sock as something bigger and a button as something smaller. Help him put this into words by saying to him, *You're right. This sock is bigger than the postage stamp, and this button is smaller than the stamp.*

3. To help your child learn to classify things by size, take three buttons which are not the same size. Put them in your child's hand. Have him place one button on the table or wherever you happen to be working. Next have him put a second button on the table and tell you if it is bigger or smaller than the first button. Tell him to put down the last button that is in his hand. Ask him which button is biggest, which one is smallest. Do the same kind of thing with socks, spoons, pieces of paper or paper bags.

4. To help your child learn the meaning of the ideas *bigger than something and smaller than something*, find a little box like a jewelry box or a toothpaste box. Ask the child to find something in the scrapbox that is small enough to fit inside the little box. Then have him find something that is big enough to hold the box, such as a pan, a bowl or a bigger box.

   After your child has found several things which will fit into the little box and several things into which the box will fit, try the same thing with a cup, a thimble or a bowl. Each time help the child put the experience into words. For example, *The spool is smaller than the box and the box is smaller than the bowl. The box is bigger than the spool and the bowl is bigger than the box.*

5. The next time you try any of these activities you may wish to say to your child, *Let's play sizes with your scrapbox.*

BEGINNING ACTIVITIES WITH SHAPE

1. Teach your child the meaning of the word *round* by helping him sort everything in the scrapbox into two piles: things that are round and things that are not round. Let him feel all of the round things and then feel the things that are not round. Help him see that the round things have no corners. Make sure he knows what *corners* are.

2. Have your child close his eyes while you put something in his hands. Have him tell you if the object is round or not round. Have him tell you it is round because it has no corners or it is not round because it does have corners.

   If your child does not like to close his eyes have him put his hands behind his back or put the object in a paper bag and let him feel inside the bag.

3. Teaching your child the meaning of the word *rectangle* is a little more difficult than teaching the meaning of round. For one thing, he may never have heard the word before. Let him say the word with you a few times before you begin the activity.

   Take three or four rectangular items from the scrapbox. Each time you take something out say, *The shape of this is a rectangle.* Then ask your child to see if he can find something else in the box that he thinks is a rectangle. Help him see that rectangles have four corners and four sides.

If you have any items in the scrapbox that are shaped like triangles you may teach the meaning of *triangle* in the same way you helped him learn about rectangles.

4. After your child has used the items in the scrapbox, let him look in other places in his home for things that are round and things that are rectangles.

5. You may then wish to play a guessing game with each other such as, *I'm thinking of something round that you ate for breakfast,* or *I'm thinking of something that is a rectangle that you sleep in. What is it?* He may want to think of something for you to guess.

6. The next time you do these activities with your child, you may wish to say, *Let's play shapes with your scrapbox.*

BEGINNING ACTIVITIES WITH WEIGHT

1. Have your child choose any object from the scrapbox. Then have him find things around the room or in the box that are heavier than the object he chose.

2. Since the items in the scrapbox are small most of them will also be light in weight. Therefore, it may be difficult to find things that are *lighter* than the object chosen. A young child will not feel the difference in weight when two objects weigh nearly the same.

3. Items in the kitchen cupboard will be easier to use than the items in the scrapbox for this activity. Hand him a box of cereal and a can of soup. Have him tell you which one is heavy and which one is light. Put two things from the cupboard on the table and have him guess which one is lighter or which one is heavier. Then let him pick them up and see if he is right. Let him choose two things for you to guess which one is heavier or lighter.

4. When you use these activities at another time say to your child, *Let's play which weighs more or which weighs less* to help him remember that the words heavy and light are talking about the weight of objects.

BEGINNING ACTIVITIES WITH TEXTURE

1. Young children learn a great deal from touching things. You can help your child learn new words to describe how an object feels. Start with words he already knows. Have him take all of the things that are *soft* out of the scrapbox; then all of the things that are *hard.* Next, have him find all of the things that are *smooth* and all of the things that are *rough.*

2. Using items around the house, have the child find other things that are hard, soft, smooth or rough.

3. Using things in the scrapbox or around the house help your child find things that feel silky, slippery, sticky, slimy, wet, bumpy or furry.

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4. Put something your child has seen many times into a paper bag. Let him feel the object and guess what it is. Let him hide something in a bag for you to guess.

5. You may want to teach your child that the word texture means how something feels. If he has learned the word then you may say, *Let's play textures with your scrapbox,* the next time you try these activities.

ACTIVITIES USING SIZE, SHAPE, COLOR, WEIGHT AND TEXTURE

Your child needs to learn that everything has size, shape, color, weight and texture. He needs to understand that something can be described using all of these ideas.

1. Begin by asking your child to find something in the scrapbox that is a certain color and end by asking him to find something using all of the ideas you have worked with. For example:
   - *Find something that is red.*
   - *Find something that is red and round.*
   - *Find something that is red and round and little.*
   - *Find something that is red, round, little and smooth.*
   - *Find something that is red, round, little, smooth and light.*

2. Let your child choose something from the scrapbox while you close your eyes. Have him hold it in his hand where you can not see it. Ask him all of the following questions before you try to guess what he took from the box:
   - *What color is it?*
   - *What shape is it?*
   - *What size is it?*
   - *How does it feel?*
   - *Is it light or heavy?*
   - *Is it a _____?*

   He may want you to hide something so he can guess.

COLLECTING AND USING CIRCULARS AND CATALOGS

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To help parents identify what circulars and catalogs can be collected as a source of free material for their children to use.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Multiple copies of circulars advertising grocery store specials, furniture sales, clothing sales etc. from local stores.

BACKGROUND: The parents provided their children with many experiences using real objects when they were using the Scrapbox Activities. Now most of their children will be ready to use the same ideas of color, size, weight, and shape to classify *pictures* of objects. Using pictures to classify objects by texture may be difficult for most preschool children.

ACTIVITY: Write the following categories on the board: color, size, shape, weight, texture. Explain to the parents that these are the ideas they worked with when they used the scrapboxes with their children. Now they are going to use these same ideas with pictures of objects in addition to using real things.

Distribute copies of the circulars and catalogs. As a group decide which materials are best for working with the various categories. Begin by having the parents look through the materials to decide which ones could be used to work with colors. Then they may decide which ones could be used to work with size and so on through the categories. They may decide that none of the materials could be used with some categories. *Do not let the parents keep the materials yet. They will be needed for future sessions.*

PURPOSE: To help parents know where to find other similar materials.

ACTIVITY: Make a list of stores in your area that give away circulars and catalogs that are useful for language experiences. The bigger stores and companies tend to have more colorful materials.

Possible sources of materials might include the following:

- advertisements mailed to the homes
- furniture stores
- department stores
- trading-stamp catalogs
- mail-order catalogs
- grocery stores
- automobile dealers
- gas stations (free maps)
- wallpaper stores (books of wallpaper samples)
- paint stores (paint color charts)

PURPOSE: To provide a box in which to store the materials collected.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A sturdy shirt or suitbox for each member of the group, and colored paper, glue, felt and felt pens to be used to decorate the boxes.

ACTIVITY: Have each parent decorate the box and write a title on the box, such as: *Johnny's Mailbox.* If the box has a name, then the parent will be able to say *Put this in your mailbox* or *Let's play some games with your mailbox, now,* instead of saying, *Get the box with all the circulars and catalogs in it.*

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To have the parent collect additional materials to use with his child at home.

ACTIVITY: Place the useful circulars that come in the mail in your child's mailbox. Go to some of the places listed by the group for other materials.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To provide the parents with suggestions for using the mailboxes.

ACTIVITY: Suggest ways the parents may use the materials. Let the parents suggest additional ideas. If the parents feel unsure of what to do, distribute copies of pages 38-39. It may be easier for the parents to think of ideas if they have some circulars and catalogs to look at during the discussion.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: For the parents to help their children use the basic ideas used in working with real objects to work with *pictures* of real objects.

ACTIVITY: Encourage the parents to try to do some of the activities suggested for using the mailbox with your child.

Provide time during the next few sessions for the parents to share their experiences using the mailboxes.

INEXPENSIVE MATERIALS YOU MAY PURCHASE

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To provide parents with a list of basic supplies that will be helpful for the young child to use.

BACKGROUND: The activities included thus far using the scrapbox and the mailbox have involved both the parent and the child. Many children will now be ready to do some of the activities alone or with less help from the parent. In order for the child to work alone it will be helpful for him to have some basic supplies of his own to use.

ACTIVITY: With suggestions from the parents make a list of basic supplies for young children. Many children may already have several of these items. The list may include the following:

- crayons
- scissors (sharp enough to cut paper easily)
- pencils
- 3 x 5 index cards
- plain paper
- colored paper
- paste or glue
- hole punch
- coloring books

Children also enjoy working with the following materials:

- clay
- water colors
- finger paints
- dough
- plain water

The parents may wish to copy the list of supplies under two headings: (1) Things We Have and (2) Things to Buy.

PURPOSE: To determine the skills needed to use the basic supplies with the scrapbox and the mailbox materials for language experiences.

BACKGROUND: Children should learn the proper way to handle materials from the very beginning.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Scissors, paste, catalogs or circulars and plain paper.

ACTIVITY: Distribute the materials among the parents. Ask them to choose a color and to cut out pictures of objects that are the color they chose. Then have them paste the pictures on a piece of plain paper.

When the parents have completed this part of the activity have them describe what skills they used.

The skills needed for this activity included:

- classifying objects by color
- knowing how to use a pair of scissors
- knowing how to cut out a picture of an object
- knowing how to cut out a picture that is in a booklet
- knowing how to put paste on the pictures
- knowing how to place the pictures on the piece of paper

Before the child can do the activity completed by the parents, he must learn the skills he will need. The parent will have to teach the skills to the child before the child is ready to do similar activities on his own.

Once again, the parent will have to decide what his child knows and what his child is ready to learn.

PURPOSE: To show the parents how to teach their children to use scissors and paste correctly.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Scissors, paste and paper.

ACTIVITY: Provide each parent with a pair of scissors and a piece of paper. Ask them to cut off a strip of paper. Ask some of the parents to describe how they held the scissors and how they used the scissors to cut the paper. As a group, decide the best way to show young children how to use scissors correctly.

Now provide the parents with paste. Ask them to cut the strip of paper into two rectangles and paste them on a piece of paper. Ask the parents to describe what they did, step by step. They should be able to answer the following questions:

- Which finger did you use for the paste?
- On which side of the paper did you put the paste?
- Where, on the paper, did you put the paste?
- How much paste did you use?
- After you put the paste on the paper what did you do?

AT HOME ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: For the parent to teach his child an effective way to use scissors and paste.

ACTIVITY: Once assured that the child uses the scissors and paste quite well for his age, the parents should let him cut out small objects from catalogs. The 3- and 4-year-olds will have to be shown how to cut around the object as in Figure 1. Five- and six-year-olds can learn to cut out all the little details of the picture as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1

Figure 2

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DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To show parents how to teach their children to hold crayons and pencils effectively.

BACKGROUND: Once a young child has formed the habit of holding a crayon or pencil awkwardly it is almost impossible to change the habit when the child starts school and begins to learn to write. Therefore, it is very important for children to be shown how to hold pencils effectively when they first start to use them.

ACTIVITY: Show tne parents effective ways to hold a pencil or crayon.

PURPOSE: To provide parents with suggestions for helping their children use the materials collected in a variety of ways.

ACTIVITY: Distribute copies of Cutting and Pasting Activities (p. 37). Discuss the activities with the parents. Point out the fact that the activities are just suggestions. The child should be encouraged to think of his own activities, as well.

CUTTING AND PASTING ACTIVITIES

Most children enjoy cutting and pasting by the age of 3 1/2 - 4 and can begin to handle scissors correctly. Some children have difficulty using scissors until the age of 5. At times your children will want to cut and paste things that please them. However, there are times when they also should be encouraged to have a plan for their activity, such as cutting and pasting objects that are the same shape on the same piece of paper.

Listed below are suggested activities for cutting and pasting. Give your children help only when they need it.

CATEGORIES

Find, cut out, and paste on a piece of paper:

- things that are red (blue, green etc.)
- 3 things that are yellow (blue, green etc.)
- 1 thing that is red and 2 things that are green
- things that are round (square, rectangular etc.)
- things that are big (little)
- something big and something little
- things that go in the kitchen (living room, bedroom etc.)
- food you eat for breakfast (lunch, supper)
- things you can sit on (sleep on, walk on etc.)
- things that you can ride on
- toys you like to play with
- clothes you can wear

PICTURES WITH TEXTURE

- Make designs or objects with pieces of cloth and paste them on the paper.
- Make pictures with macaronis, spaghetti, rice, etc. and past them on paper.
- Use little pieces of egg shell to make a design to paste.
- Use toothpicks for pictures.
- Paste one thing on the paper that has texture and use crayons to draw a picture around it.
- Paste one thing on the paper that is soft, one that is smooth and, one that is rough.

USING THE INDEX CARDS

- Start a collection of small pictures of objects pasted on index cards. These cards will be used for many activities.
- The cards can be sorted into categories.
- They can be counted.
- They can be labeled.

MAILBOX ACTIVITIES

Circulars and catalogs can be very useful materials for your child to use for language experiences. Collect these materials for your child's mailbox. You may receive them in the mail or get them at the grocery stores, department stores, or trading-stamp centers.

Listed below are some of the ways you may use the mailbox with your child.

COLORS

1. Pick one catalog and have your child name and point to all of items that are the same color. For example, point to and name all of the things that are blue. You might ask him to name the color he wants to look for.

2. You may want to count all of the things on one page or in one catalog that are the same color.

3. You may name an object, such as a chair, and see how many different colored chairs you can find.

SIZES

1. Look through a catalog to find little things; big things. Help your child understand that a picture of an object is sometimes smaller than the real object and sometimes larger.

2. Point to one object on a page and have your child find a picture of something that would be bigger, *if* you had the real objects or smaller *if* you had the real objects. For example: a picture of a spoon may be larger than a picture of a chair *but* spoons are *really* smaller than chairs.

SHAPES

1. Have your child point to and name some pictures of things that are round, square, rectangular, and triangular.

2. Look for pictures of objects that have *hidden shapes*. A square clock may have a round face. A rectangular dresser may have square drawers.

3. To help the child understand that some objects come in many shapes, choose a page that has many pictures of one object, such as a page of clocks, or a page of pillows. Find as many different shapes for one object as you can.

WEIGHT

1. Help your child understand that pictures of objects will be the same weight even though the real objects do not weigh the same. Look through the pictures for things that would be heavy if you had the real object

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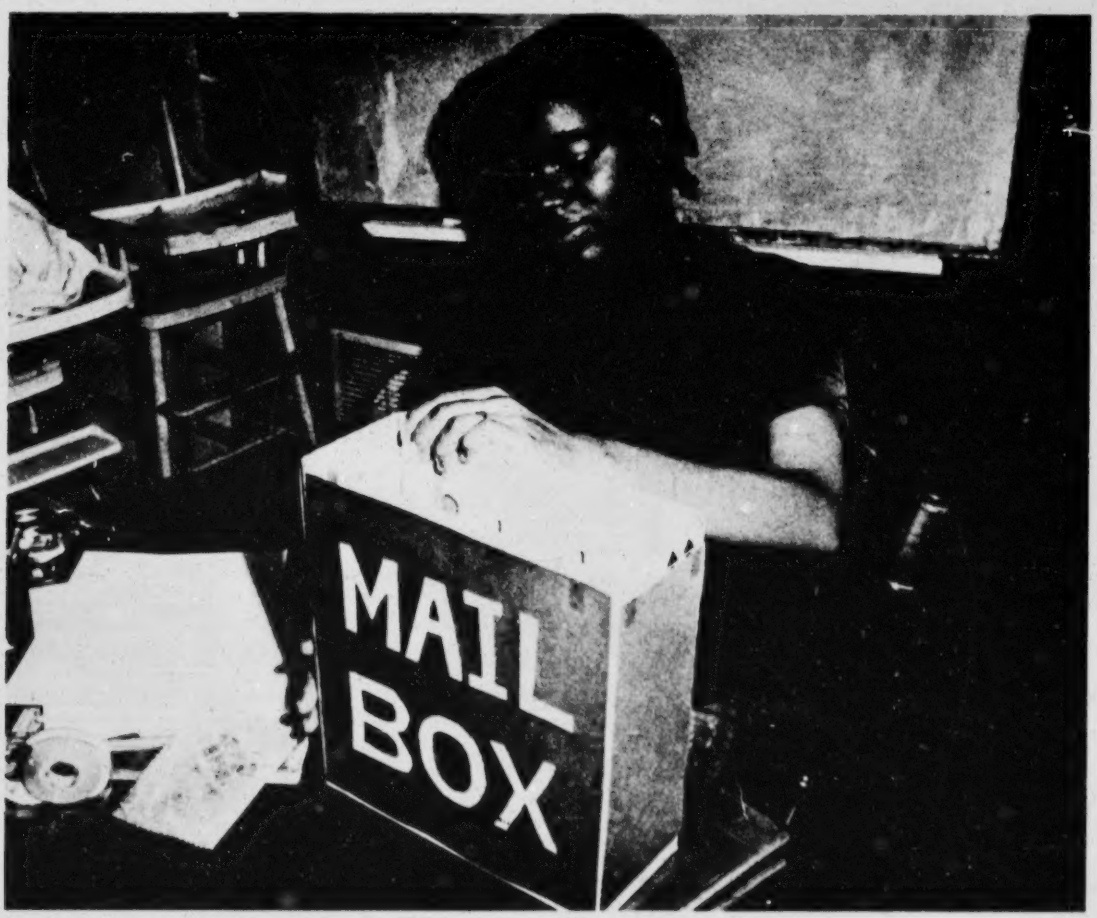
(cars, beds, sofas etc.). Then look for pictures of things that would be light (pillows, curtains, shirts etc.)

2. When it is possible, have your child find pictures of two objects and guess which one weighs more. Then have him pick up the real objects and see if he is right. He might choose a picture of a can of soup and a picture of a spoon, or a picture of a pillow and a picture of a sheet.

TEXTURE

Name a texture, such as soft or smooth, and have your child point to and name pictures of objects that would really feel that way. For example: sheets, pillows, shirts and nightgowns may be soft; tables, dressers and lamps may be hard.

It is sometimes hard to tell from a picture how the real object would feel. The child only will be able to guess how something in a picture would feel after he has had many experiences touching and describing real objects.



VII. HOW TO MAKE THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET

Children's small muscles usually are not developed enough to learn to write until approximately *6* years of age. Parents should be cautioned against teaching or encouraging their children to write until the children have had many experiences using crayons and pencils. However, parents should begin writing words, sentences, and stories *for* their children by the time the children are 4 years of age. This will introduce the concept that writing is one way of recording thought and speech.

Writing words and sentences for children is excellent preparation for the beginning reading and writing instruction the child will receive in school.

Whenever parents write something for their children, they should set a good example for them by forming each letter carefully and correctly. Care should also be taken to use capital letters only where capital letters belong, such as the first letter of the child's name or at the beginning of a sentence.

It is not necessary for parents to use lined paper when writing something for their children. However, lined paper is easier to use while the parents are "brushing up" on the handwriting skills.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To show the parents the correct way to make the basic strokes needed to form the letters of the alphabet.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Pencils, lined paper, plain paper, and erasers.

ACTIVITY: Show the parents how to make the basic strokes. Then provide time for them to practice before going on to the next activity. (Line the board before you begin if you plan to demonstrate on the board. For easier visibility, line the board with one color chalk and write with another.) Each parent should have a pencil, lined paper, and an eraser for this activity.

NOTE: The teacher should be thoroughly familiar with correct letter formation before teaching this activity to parents. This form of writing is called printing or manuscript handwriting. Most parents will probably be more comfortable with the term "printing" although the proper term is "manuscript handwriting."

THE BASIC STROKES

1. The Straight Line

Straight lines are always made from top to bottom. Some letters are formed with a "two-space line," others use a "one-space line."

2. The Circle

The circle is always made in a *counter clockwise* direction beginning at the top, regardless of what letter is being written.

3. The Slanted Line

When forming letters which use slanted lines, make all of the lines from top to bottom. (i.e. W, V, M) Pull down on the pencil; do not push up to make the stroke.

4. The Horseshoe

This stroke is used to form the letters: h, m, n and u.

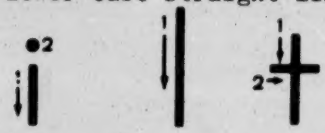
PURPOSE: To use the basic strokes to form the lower-case letters. (Begin with the lower-case letters since parents have more difficulty forming these letters correctly than capital letters.)

MATERIALS NEEDED: A large chart showing the lower-case letters written in manuscript form.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents look at the chart of lower case letters to identify all of the letters which are formed using only straight lines.

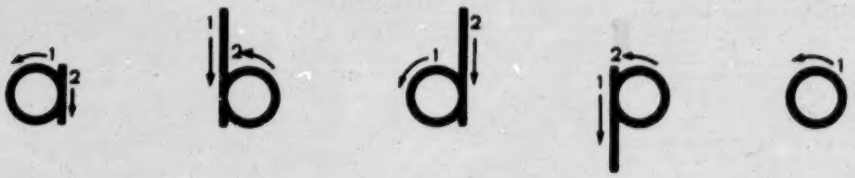
As each letter is identified, show them the correct way to form the letter. Then let the parents practice the letter on lined paper.

The lower-case straight-line letters are:

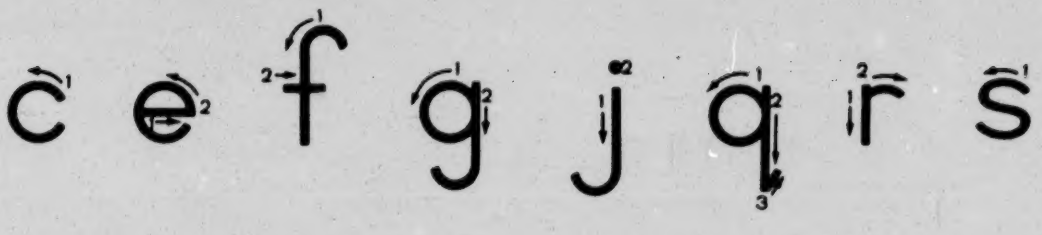


Stress that letters are made from top to bottom, left to right.

Next, have the parents identify and learn to make the lower-case letters using only straight lines and circles. These letters include:

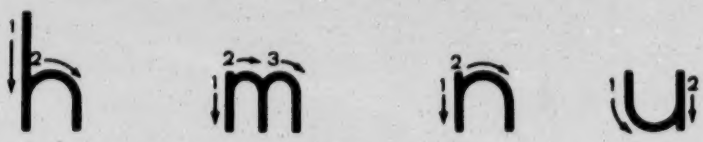


Related letters include:



Now have the parents identify and learn to make the lower-case letters using slanted lines. These letters include:

The last group of letters uses the horseshoe shape and includes:



If you wish to have the parents practice writing words using the correct letter formation, the following list may be used. Each letter of the alphabet is included at least once.

ball	red	cat
fish	zoo	you
jump	quack	gave
now	wax	

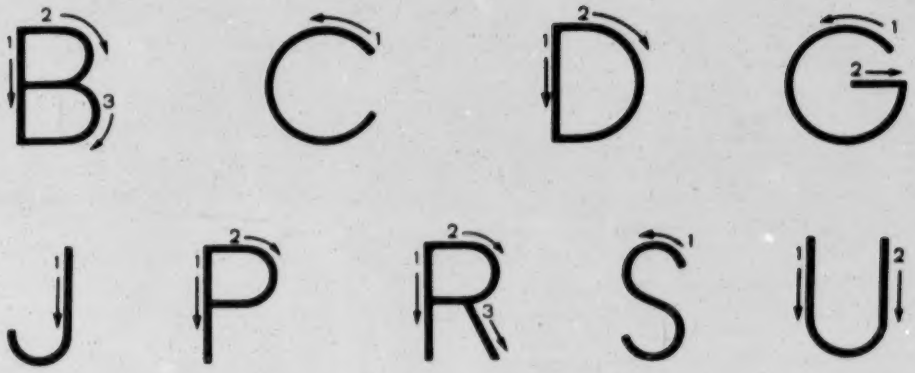
PURPOSE: To use the basic strokes to form the upper-case, or capital letters.

ACTIVITY: Follow the same pattern that was used to teach the lower-case letters.

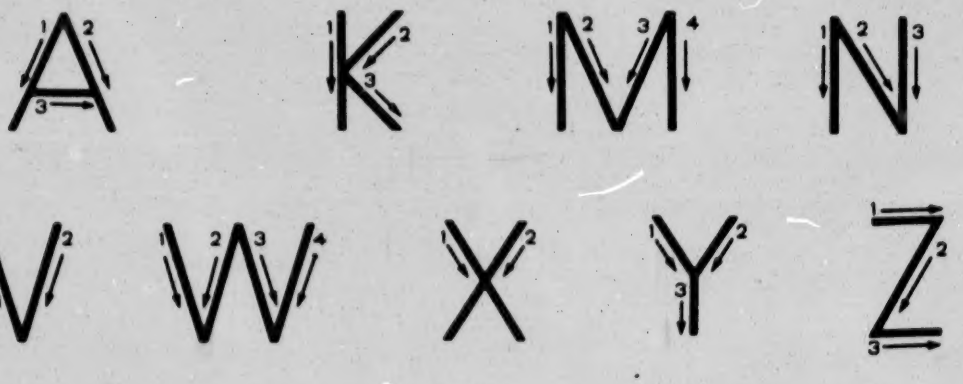
The straight-line capital letters are:

The circle letters are:

Related letters include:



Capital letters formed with slanted lines include:



If you wish to have the parents practice writing words using the correct letter formation for capital letters you may use the following common traffic signs. (Real traffic signs are usually printed in capital letters.)

STOP WAIT

WALK SCHOOL ZONE

GO YIELD BUS

QUIET DANGER MEN

To give the activity a more personal touch, you may wish to have the parents practice writing the names of the people in their families. Be sure they use capital letters for *only* the first letter of each name.

John Jennifer Michael

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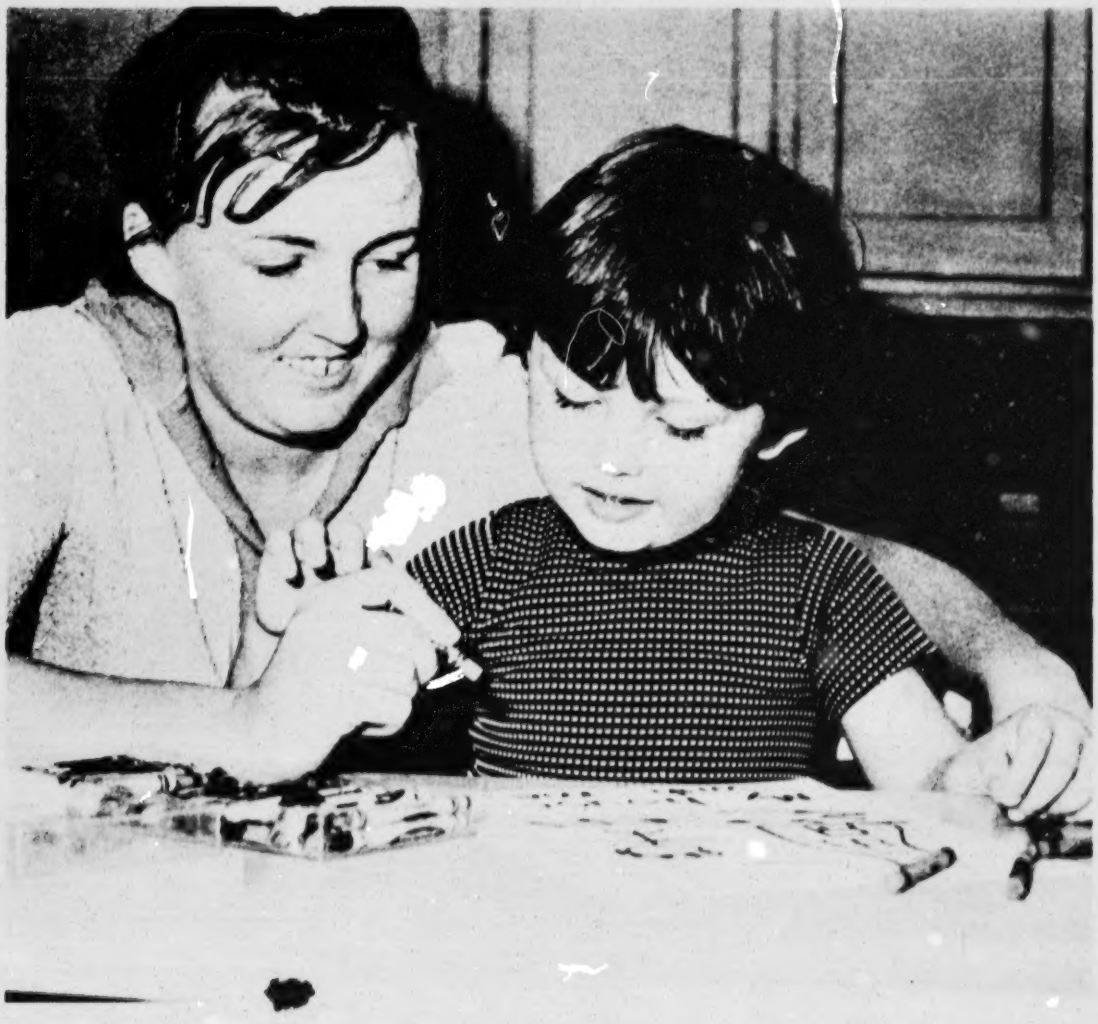
AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: For the parents to practice forming the upper-case and lower-case letters of the alphabet.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Provide each parent with a copy of the sheet entitled: How to Make the Letters of the Alphabet (pp. 46-48).

ACTIVITY: Have the parents practice writing letters in manuscript form whenever they write at home. For a while they may wish to keep the directions close at hand. The cursive letters are provided for the parents to refer to later when their children begin to learn cursive letter formation. Practice in their correction formation at this time should be considered an optional activity.



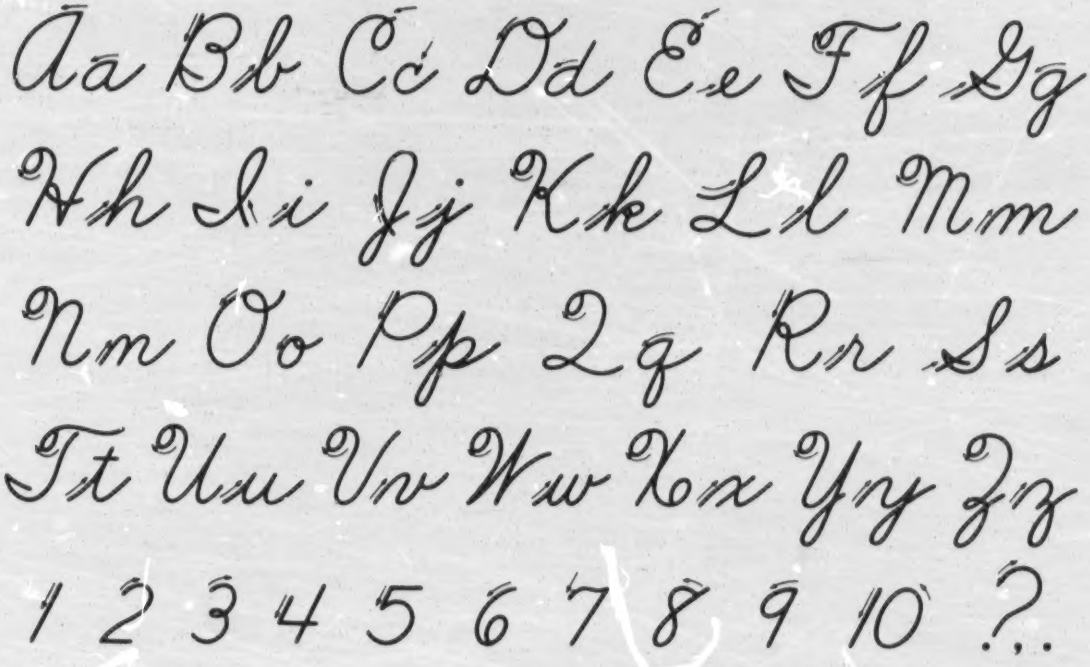
HOW TO MAKE THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET
(upper case manuscript)

The arrows indicate the manner and order in which the hand movements should be made.

HOW TO MAKE THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET
(lower case manuscript)

The arrows indicate the manner and order in which the hand movements should be made.

HOW TO MAKE THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET
(cursive)



VIII. GAMES YOU CAN MAKE AT HOME

Most children are not ready to play games with rules until they are at least 4 years of age. Even at 4 the games should be simple with just a few easy rules. Children often have favorite games they like to play over and over again. They need to be provided with new experiences by teaching them new games.

When young children play games they are often "bad losers." They want to win and often expect the other players to let them win. So keep competition at a low level with preschoolers, but do make him "win" fairly.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To show parents how to make an inexpensive flannel board to use for playing language experience games.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A piece of stiff cardboard, enough lightweight flannel to cover and overlap the sides of the piece of cardboard, tape or a stapler. You may wish to ask each parent to bring the supplies to this session to make his own flannel board in place of showing them how to make it at home.

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate to the parents how to make a flannel board. You may wish to write the needed materials on the board before you begin.

HOW TO MAKE A FLANNEL BOARD

1. Place a piece of flannel, that is 2-3 inches larger on all sides than the selected cardboard, on a flat surface. Place it "furry-side" down.

2. Center the cardboard on top of the flannel.

3. Fold the extra flannel over the edges of the cardboard and tape or staple into place. After you have taped (or stapled) two sides, pick it up to make sure the flannel is tightly wrapped around the cardboard.

4. Fold over and tape the remaining two sides.

5. Whenever the flannel gets dirty, just unwrap it and wash it; then put it back around the cardboard.

PURPOSE: To provide parents with suggested activities for using the flannel board.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Sandpaper or scraps of felt, small pieces of various kinds of cloth or yarn, small pictures cut from magazines or catalogs, and index cards.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents determine what materials will stick to their flannel boards. Small pieces of these materials can then be glued to the backs of pictures and index cards to make them also stay on the board. Usually sandpaper and pieces of felt work very well.

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When in use, the flannel board may be leaned against a table or a wall or placed flat on the floor.

Distrubute copies of Using the Flannel Board (p. 51). Discuss with the parent what materials they will need to make with their children before they do the activities.

USING THE FLANNEL BOARD

Most children enjoy the softness of a flannel board. They also feel a "bit of magic" in the way they can make certain objects stick to the flannel. Below are listed some simple games to play using the flannel board. Many of the games could be played by using any flat surface instead of the flannel board.

I'M GOING TO THE STORE

Materials needed:

Many little pictures of items that may be purchased in different kinds of stores, such as things from a grocery store, a drug store, a hardware store, etc. The pictures may be pasted on index cards, which have little pieces of sandpaper glued on the back, or you may just glue the sandpaper to the back of the picture. The "mailboxes" should be a good source of pictures.

Rules of the game:

To start the game have one of the players name a store or a kind of store; i.e., the A&P or a grocery store. You may wish to write the choice on an index card and put it at the top of the flannel board.

Next, spread out all of the pictures in front of the players. Each player, in turn, may choose a picture of something which may be found in the store selected for the game and place it on the flannel board.

The child must be able to say where he is going and what he is going to buy *before* he can place the picture on the flannel board. He is allowed only to put on pictures of things that can really be purchased in the kind of store chosen.

The child might say, *I'm going to the grocery store and buy some bananas.* He would then put a picture of bananas on the board.

Purposes of the game:

- To help children learn to wait for their turn when playing a game.
- To classify objects by the stores where they may be purchased.

Number of Players: Two or three

Young children find it difficult to wait for a turn. Therefore, play the games with a few children so that their turn comes often. Insist that the children wait for their turns when they play. Teach them good habits of fair play from the very beginning.

To make the game more difficult:

After all of the objects that can be purchased at a given store are on the flannel board choose one person to be "chief counter." The chief counter sits in front of the board. All other players sit with their backs to the board. These players, in turn, name all the things they can remember that were on the board. The chief counter counts (or takes off) the objects named. The person who remembers the most objects wins the game.

IT WILL FIT

Materials needed:

Many little pictures of containers that are different sizes such as cans, cars, houses, pillow cases, boxes, etc. prepared for use on the flannel board.

You may want to write the name of the game on an index card and put it at the top of the board.

Rules of the game:

1. To start the game, one of the players chooses a picture of a small container and places it on the board. Each player in turn has to choose a picture of a container that is large enough to hold the first container.

For example: The first player places a cup on the board. The other players chose a car, a pan, a tissue box and a house, because the cup *will fit* into each of those containers.

2. The game may also be started by having one player choose a picture of a *large* container. Then each player, in turn adds a picture of something that will fit into the large container.

For example: The first player placed a pillow case on the board. The other players chose a cup, a cereal box, a jar and a bowl because each of these *will fit* into the pillow case.

Number of Players: Two or three

To make the game more difficult:

Start with one small object. Then each player has to add something that will hold whatever the last player added. For example: Start with a cup; add a tissue box because it will hold the cup; then add a pillow case because it will hold the box; add a suitcase; it will hold the pillow case etc. The player who can add the most objects wins the game.

AND THEN

Materials needed:

Small pictures of any objects prepared for use on the flannel board.

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Rules of the game:

One player starts to tell a story. He then puts a picture on the flannel board and makes it fit into the story. Each player, in turn, has to add another picture to the board and tell what happened next in the story.

For example: The first player may begin, *One day this little boy lost something. He lost a toothbrush.* (He would then place a picture of a toothbrush on the board.)

The next player continues the story, *And then he went to buy a new one.* (He would put another picture of a toothbrush on the board.)

A third player may add, *On the way to the store he saw a blue car.* (He would place a picture of a blue car on the board and so on.)

Number of Players: 3 or 4

To make the game more difficult:

1. Each player has to retell the whole story told so far before he can add to the story. (With very young children help them retell the story but let them decide what to add.)

2. Place two or three objects on the board and have each player tell a story about the objects.

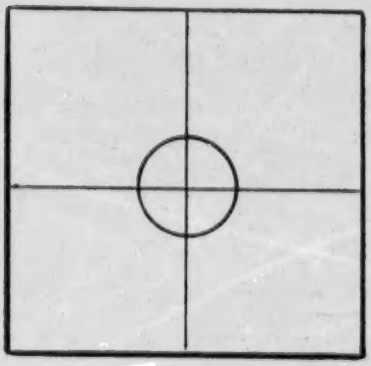
There are many games which can be purchased for use with a flannel board.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES:

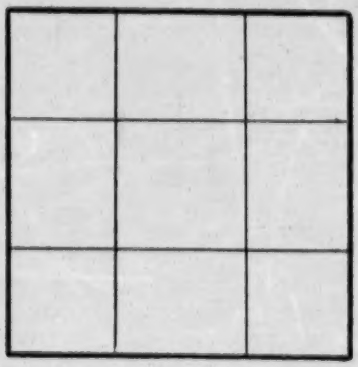
PURPOSE: To show parents how to make "game boards" for their children.

MATERIALS NEEDED: The parents should bring the following materials to this session: 4 pieces of cardboard (i.e., the larger sides cut from cereal boxes), crayons, a ruler, a source of pictures, glue, index cards and scissors.

ACTIVITY: Using a crayon have the parents draw lines on the pieces of cardboard to make the following patterns: (They should make two boards for each pattern.)



Board #1



Board #2

Games using Board #1 will require a board for each player. Since Board #2 is used for games similar to *Tic-Tac-Toe*, one board is needed for every two players.

PURPOSE: To show the parents how to use Board #1.

ACTIVITY: Explain to the parents that the object of the games using Board #1 is for the player to choose a category to fill the four squares. The first player to fill the board with pictures that go together is the winner.

To make the materials for Board #1 have the parents do the following:

- Cut 12 index cards in half.
- Glue little pictures on each piece of index card.
- Cut 6 circles, the same size as the one on the board, from index cards.
- Glue a picture on each side of the circles.
- There are now two kinds of cards: "square cards" and "center cards."

You may wish to explain the rules of the game for Board #1 or distribute copies to the parents.

1. Spread out the "center cards" in front of the players. Each player chooses one card and places it in the circle in the center of his board.

2. Put all of the "square cards" in a pile faced down. Each player, in turn, turns over the top card. If it goes with his center card in some way he places it on one of the squares on the board. If he can't use the card he places it on the bottom of the pile. The first player to fill his board is the winner.

   Note: Each player must be able to tell how the square card goes with the center card *before* he can place it on his board. For example: same color, same shape, things to eat, or both have wheels.

3. Add new cards to the game now and then to give it more variety.

To make the game more difficult:

Each player must name one category for using the center card *before* the game begins. He can not change categories after the game has started.

PURPOSE: To show parents how to use Board #2.

ACTIVITY: Make sure that the parents remember how to play Tic-Tac-Toe. In order to use the board more than once, each player should use buttons, corn, beans, etc. to mark his squares instead of making X's or O's on the board. Or X's and O's may be written on small pieces of index cards and used by the players.

The "square cards" made for Board #1 may also be used for playing Tic-Tac-Toe with Board #2.

You may explain the rules for using Board #2 or distribute them to the parents.

1. First teach the child to play Tic-Tac-Toe.

2. To play other games with Board #2 try any of the following:

   - Select a color. Before a player may choose a square for Tic-Tac-Toe he must name something that color. (You may also use sizes or shapes.)
   - Spread out some of the "square cards" faced down. Choose one of the cards. Before a player may choose a square for tic-tac-toe he must name an object that goes with the picture. For example, if the picture of a car is chosen the players might name trucks, busses, trains, bicycles, etc.
   - If the square cards will fit in the spaces on Board #2 the players may place the cards on the board for Tic-Tac-Toe by categories decided before the start of the game. The square cards would be placed in a pile faced down. Each player would turn over a card. If the card goes with the category he may place it on the board. The first player with three cards in a row is the winner.

PURPOSE: To let the parents play the games introduced to make sure they have the necessary materials.

ACTIVITY: Have each parent choose a partner and play games with the two boards.

IX. WRITING DOWN CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

Children should have had many experiences looking at books and hearing stories read to them before the parents begin to write down ideas dictated by their children. The children should understand, through experience, that the words read by the parent are printed on the page.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES:

PURPOSE: To provide the parents with guidelines for writing down their children's experiences.

ACTIVITY: Distribute and discuss copies of Writing Down your Children's Experiences (p. 57).

PURPOSE: For the parents to draw some simple labeled pictures to stimulate their child's interest in written language.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Ask the parents to bring plain paper and crayons (or felt markers) to this session.

ACTIVITY: Have the parents draw several simple pictures on pieces of plain paper. They should draw common objects that their children will recognize. Then have the parents write a short phrase or sentence to go with each picture. For example:

The parent may wish to draw the pictures with black crayon and have the child color the pictures at home. This will help the child feel more a part of the activity from the beginning.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To help children become interested in written language.

ACTIVITY: Write short sentences or phrases, *suggested by the child* using the suggested activities.

WRITING DOWN YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCES

Children enjoy sharing their art work with other members of the family. They also like to talk about experiences they have had. One way to make these occasions seem more important is for the child to have some of his ideas written down. By hearing someone read what he said the child is starting to understand what reading is all about.

The following order of activities is suggested:

1. When your child brings you a picture he has made, or drawn or pasted ask him what he would like you to write about it. If may be something simple like: *Johnny's Picture*, or he may want you to write many sentences about the picture. Sometimes he may not want you to write anything.

2. If you and your child have just returned from somewhere that was fun have your child tell you a sentence to write down about the experience.

   You may write the sentence on a plain piece of paper and have the child draw a picture to go with it while you do something else. Share it with the rest of the family when it is finished.

3. You may want to start an *Experience Scrapbook*. Any notebook with paper will do. Each day have the child tell about one thing that happened. Write it in the notebook. Put the date on the page. The child may make a picture to go with the sentences if he wants to.

4. If you are a family that takes pictures of things that you do, let the family dictate sentences to write on the back of each picture or write under the pictures if you place them in an album.

5. Most children enjoy making little books. Your child may draw two or three pictures which you then glue or staple together to make his first book. Have him tell you what to write on each page. Write it, then read his story to him.

6. You are writing down your child's ideas to help him learn to share his thoughts in a different way. You are helping him understand that ideas that are spoken can be written down. He may begin to pick out words that have been written down many times. However, if the child is 5 or younger, do not make learning to read one of the goals for recording the child's ideas.

X. HOW TO WRITE STORIES WITH YOUR CHILD

This major activity should be started after the children have had many opportunities to tell about real experiences they have had. The purpose of this activity is to help children learn to put their ideas together to tell a story. Sometimes they may tell a story about something that really happened. At other times they may tell a make-believe story.

This activity of telling stories will be divided into four major sections:

1. Starting With An Object
2. Starting With An Idea
3. Starting With A Picture
4. Starting With A Title

STARTING WITH AN OBJECT

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To show the parents the difference between writing down the child's experiences and writing stories with their children.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Ask the parents to bring some of the materials that were made at home for the previous activity (Writing Down your Child's Experiences).

ACTIVITY: Have the parents show some of the materials they brought with them. Point out samples that show that the child was telling about things that really happened. In this activity the parent and child will be making books that will not always be about something that the child has done.

PURPOSE: To show the parents how to write stories with their children, starting with an object.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A simple object such as a button, a pencil or a felt pen and a stapler, a book, several sheets of paper.

- Demonstrate the procedure the parents should follow with their children.

ACTIVITY:

- Pass an object around so that each parent has a chance to feel and look at the object.
- Then explain to the parents that they are going to tell you a story about the object. The story will include how the object looks and how it feels.
- Have someone suggest a name for the story. Write the title on a piece of paper. This will be the cover for the book so the letters should be quite large. Perhaps the authors' names might be included on the cover.

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- Have the parents describe the object using complete sentences. Write each sentence on a separate piece of paper. These will make the pages of the book so number each page as you go along.

- Pass out the completed pages and ask parents to draw the object described on the page. These pictures are the illustrations for the book.

- Staple all of the pages together with the cover on top. The book is now completed.

- Have one of the parents read the book to the group.

- Review with the parents the steps to follow at home when they write a story with their children starting with an object. You may wish to distribute copies of Writing a Story - Starting With an Object (p. 60).

AT HOME ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To have the parent help his child tell a story describing an object.

ACTIVITY: Encourage the parents to make a book with their child about some object they have at home.

WRITING A STORY - STARTING WITH AN OBJECT

1. Collect the following materials:

   - an object
   - paper
   - pen, pencil or crayon
   - crayons
   - ruler

2. Tell the child what you are going to do together.

3. Let the child feel the object and look at it closely.

4. Let the child suggest a title for the story. Write it on a piece of paper in large letters.

5. Write the child's name under the title and explain that he is the *author*, or *storyteller*, of the book.

6. Have the child tell you how the object looks. Help him to include the size, color and shape of the object. He may also tell about some of the parts of the object; i.e., a button has round holes. Write each sentence on a separate piece of paper.

7. Have the child tell you how the object feels. Write each sentence on a separate piece of paper.

8. Number each page in the order in which the child told them.

9. Have the child draw a picture of the object on the title page, or you may draw the object and let the child color it.

10. If the child likes to draw, let him sketch a picture of the object on each page. Since each page tells about the *same* object, he should draw the object the same way on each page.

11. Put all of the pages in order with the title page on top. Then staple, or punch holes and tie all of the pages together. The book is now completed.

12. Read the book to your child.

13. Let other members of the family or visitors read the book to your child.

14. When you and your child write other stories - starting with an object, you may also include how the object is used.

STARTING WITH AN IDEA

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE: To show the parents how to write stories with their children starting with an idea.

ACTIVITY:

- Explain to the parents that stories can be told about an idea, as well as an object.
- Demonstrate the activity using the following steps.
- Write the following "ideas" on the board:
  - losing a tooth
  - a holiday is coming
  - a bad day
  - a favorite word

These ideas are about experiences all children have had or will have and can be used for story ideas. The parents will be able to add many more ideas to the list at the end of the session.

- Use the idea "losing a tooth" to write two group stories.
  - First have the group tell the story as an experience story.
  - Then have the group use the idea to tell a make-believe story.
  - Distribute Using an Idea to Tell an Experience Story (below) and Using an Idea to Tell a Make-believe Story (p. 62).

NOTE: The samples on page 63 are included to give the *teacher* ideas for developing these kinds of stories with parents.

USING AN IDEA TO TELL AN EXPERIENCE STORY

1. Start with an idea. Make the idea the title for the story.
2. Have the child describe what happened step by step. Write each "step" on a separate piece of paper. Number the pages.
3. Be sure the story only tells about one idea.
4. Draw pictures for the book if you wish.
5. Put the pages in order and staple or tie it together.

USING AN IDEA TO TELL A MAKE-BELIEVE STORY

1. Start with an idea. Make the idea the title for the story.

2. Help the child make up *characters* for the story. The *characters* could be people or animals. Help the child decide:

   - *Who will be in the story. (Start with one character. Never use more than three.)*
   - *What they look like.*
   - *Where they are or where they live.*

   Write the child's ideas on a piece of paper.

3. Next help your child tell what happened to the character. Make sure he sticks to the one idea used for the title. It may help your child if you ask the following questions:

   - *What happened to the character?*
   - *How did that happen?*
   - *How did he feel about that?*
   - *Now what is he doing?*
   - *How should the story end?*

   Write the child's sentences on paper as he tells them to you.

4. Your child may talk faster than you can write neatly. Write everything he says and copy it over later if you need to.

5. Each time the child has difficulty telling parts of the story, reread the whole story told so far, including the title. Then ask him a question to get him started again.

6. Be careful not to give your child more help than he needs. Let it be his story.

7. Read the whole story to your child before any of the pictures are made.

8. Read the page which describes the characters. Then draw a picture on the title page. Since the story came from an idea, the child may have difficulty drawing his own pictures to go with the story and may need your help.

9. If a picture is drawn on each page it should show what happened on the page.

10. Put the pages in order and staple or tie the book together.

11. Read the completed book to your child.

12. Have other people read it to your child.

SAMPLE STORIES FOR THIS ACTIVITY

THE IDEA: LOSING A TOOTH

An Experience Story:

Yesterday I lost a tooth. It was a little tooth. It hurt when it came out. There is a hole where the tooth used to be. I put the tooth under my pillow. My father said I will grow a new tooth in the hole.

A Make-Believe Story:

This is a story about a little boy. He is 4. He has brown hair like me. He is little. He lives upstairs in an apartment.

The little boy lost a tooth. He was eating a peanut butter sandwich and it just fell out.

He feels funny without his tooth.

Now he has a hole in his mouth and a tooth in his hand.

He will keep the tooth a long time. Then he will throw it out.

STARTING WITH A PICTURE

DIRECTED ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To show parents how to write stories with their children starting with a picture.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Pictures from coloring books or magazines that have very little detail.

ACTIVITY: Explain to the parents that this session will include telling stories starting with a picture.

Demonstrate the activity using the following steps:

- Explain to the parents that any picture may be used for storytelling. However, children find it easier to use simple pictures than "busy" pictures.
- Show them some examples of simple pictures. The pictures may have been drawn by a child or taken from a magazine or coloring book.
- Let the parents choose one of the pictures for telling a group story, or you may use the photo included on page viii of this manual.
- Have the parents tell a story about the illustration as you write it down, following the same steps needed for Using An Idea To Tell A Make-Believe Story.

- Read the story to the parents and let them help you decide which parts of the story should be on each page. Set the story up in book form and share it with the group at the next session. (If there is time, you may write the story on the board by pages and let each parent make his own copy of the story to take home to his child.)

- Distribute Using a Picture to Tell a Story (below).

USING A PICTURE TO TELL A STORY

1. Let the storyteller help you choose a simple picture.
2. Talk about who is in the picture and what is happening.
3. Give the picture a title.
4. Follow the steps used for Using An Idea To Tell A Make-Believe Story to complete the book.

STARTING WITH A TITLE

DIRECTED ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To show parents how to write stories with their children starting with a title.

ACTIVITY: To show the parents the difference between starting with an *idea* and starting with a *title*, write the following on the board and discuss how the two are alike and different.

IDEAS	TITLES
• losing a tooth	My First Loose Tooth
• having a birthday	Today I Am Four
• a favorite word	Elbows, Elbows
• a friend	A Next-Door Friend

- Have the parents select a title and tell a group story. Follow the same steps used for telling other make-believe stories.

- Have the parents suggest additional titles they might use with their children for storytelling experiences. Some suggestions include:
  - I Will Be Bigger Soon
  - The Scary Afternoon
  - My Very Own Lollipop Tree
  - A Pickle Party for Peter
  - A Lion in a Pocket
  - Where Did You Go?

If there is time, each parent might enjoy choosing a title and trying to write his own short story for children.